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LETTER DATED 19 OCTOBER 1992 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the situation in El Salvador on which I last briefed the Security Council, at informal consultations, on 10 September 1992.

Since that date, important progress has been achieved in implementing the Peace Agreements but there have also been further delays in the agreed schedule.

The most important progress has been on the problem of land to which I referred in my statement on 10 September and on which the Secretariat has worked intensively. After receiving technical advice from FAO, IMF and the World Bank, I sent Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding to San Salvador on 28 September to help my Special Representative search with both parties for solutions which might bring them closer together. As a result of the visit a number of issues were clarified and progress was made.

The work begun in San Salvador was continued in New York, in close consultation with experts inside and outside the United Nations system. As a result, on 13 October, I presented to President Cristiani and to the General Command of FMLN a proposal which, in my judgement, was an equitable compromise between their positions. It set out terms and conditions for the transfer of land to former combatants of both sides and for the formalization of the land-tenure system, or if necessary the relocation on new land, of persons who during the hostilities had moved onto land in the conflict zones.

I am happy to be able to report to the Security Council that I received letters from both parties dated 15 and 16 October confirming that they accepted my proposal and were committed to working with each other to implement it as soon as possible. Intensive efforts by the Government and full cooperation from FMLN will be required if we are to achieve a prompt and speedy transfer of large areas of land, especially to the former combatants of FMLN as provided for in the Agreement.

It is now necessary to resolve as soon as possible the problem posed by the further delays that have occurred in the schedule of implementation of the Peace Agreements. In this connection, it will be recalled that according to the original schedule, which forms an integral part of the Agreements, the transfer of land was to be completed by the end of July 1992. Another important element of the Agreements was the establishment of the new National Civil Police, whose first units were to be deployed no later than 28 October 1992. Both these essential commitments by the Government were thus to have been completed before completion of the demobilization of FMLN which is scheduled for 31 October. The purpose of the changes made to the schedule on 17 June and 19 August was therefore to adjust the phasing of the demobilization of FMLN combatants to take account of the delays in the implementation of the land transfer programme and the police project, always with the intention of retaining 31 October as the date by which demobilization of FMLN was to be completed.

As of now 40 per cent of FMLN combatants have returned to civilian life. One third of the 60 per cent who still have their weapons were due to leave the assembly areas on 30 September and a further one third on 15 October; the final one third were to be demobilized on 31 October. On 30 September members of the FMLN General Command informed Mr. Goulding that they had decided to suspend the demobilization of their forces until new dates had been set for the start of the transfer of land and for the implementation of other aspects of the Agreements which had fallen behind schedule. Mr. Goulding urged them to reconsider this decision but without success.

This development is cause for great concern. So, too, are continuing suspicions that significant quantities of arms held by FMLN were not included in the inventories presented to ONUSAL at the beginning of the cease-fire. In face of these difficulties, I have concentrated on resolving the problem of land, believing that it constituted the most serious obstacle to timely implementation of the Peace Agreements and that its solution would open the way to rapid progress.

Now that this problem is on the way to being resolved, a concerted effort is necessary to get the process back on track. For essentially practical reasons, related to the complicated process of demobilization in 15 different locations, I do not believe that it will be possible to complete the dismantling of the military structures of FMLN by 31 October 1992, as provided for in the Peace Agreements.

Accordingly, within the next few days I shall present to the parties a proposal for overcoming this difficulty and, if necessary, undertaking a third revision of the agreed timetable. In that case I would emphasize that this revision must be the final one, and that both parties must fully commit themselves to abiding by the new schedule. I shall remind the parties that I am required, before the end of October, to submit recommendations to the Security Council on the future strength and mandate of ONUSAL after its current mandate comes to an end on 31 October 1992. I shall further draw their attention to the fact that United Nations peace-keeping services are

currently in great demand and to the consequent need to avoid any undue extension of the planned schedule for ONUSAL. At the same time, I shall assure them that I shall recommend that ONUSAL remain in place, albeit at reduced strength, until it has discharged all the responsibilities assigned to it under the Peace Agreements.

I should be grateful if you would bring the matters in this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council. Meanwhile, I am having it circulated as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI